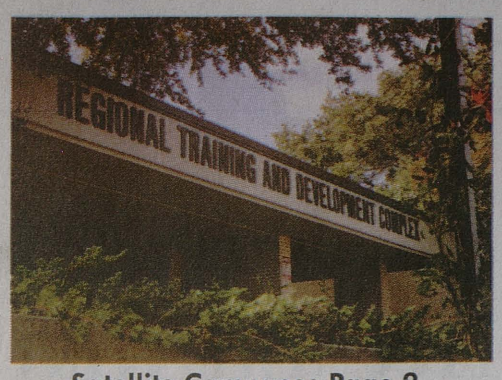
THE DRUMBEAT
Student media since 1927
Tyler Junior College



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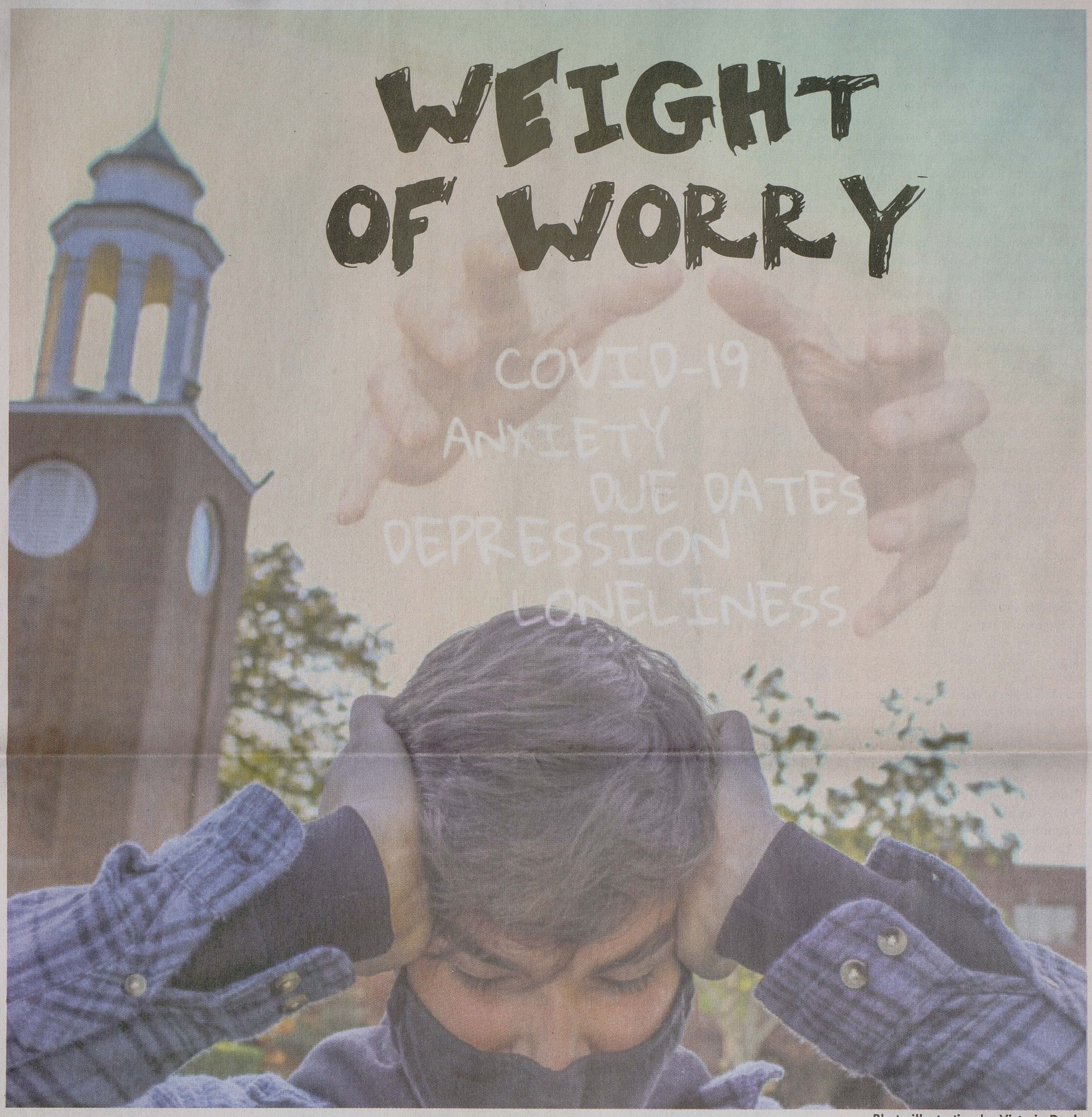


Photo illustration by Victoria Deal

TJC offers third-party mental health services to students while few options remain on campus

By Madison Heiser
Editor-in-Chief

Tyler Junior College offers mental health services to its students through its on-campus counseling office, located on the third floor of Rogers Student Center. Currently, the office has one counselor on staff, Tracey Williams, to assist students in handling personal issues that affect their experience at TJC.

According to TJC's counseling services website, "the overall goal is to assist the student by stabilizing mood, discussing plausible solutions and providing information about services both on campus and in the community that may be of assistance." Students are allowed six counseling sessions per long semester and must be enrolled at TJC to receive services. Costs are covered through the $35 student health fee charged with tuition.

During the 2019-20 school year, TJC's Student Senate formed a Health and Safety Committee to address overall wellness issues within the student body. According to Kaden Phinney, Student Senate's current executive president, the main goal of the committee was to obtain a second counselor on campus.

"After researching and finding out statistics of counselor to student ratios, almost every other school within a 100-mile span had a better ratio. Ours is 12,000 students to one counselor," Phinney said.

According to an article from The DrumBeat from September 2019, Kilgore College had three licensed professional counselors on staff for a student body of approximately 5,000, and Del Mar college staffed four counselors and two graduate students for a student body of more than 12,000. TJC has one counselor on staff for a student body of 12,007.

According to Phinney, Student Senate was ready to present a proposal to TJC's Faculty Senate to hire another counselor in March. However, the COVID-19 pandemic cut the in-person semester short and therefore halted the proposal.

"COVID has taken a big hit on some people's mental health, and I love that TJC is trying to keep it an important subject," Phinney said.

According to a Kaiser Family Foundation tracking poll, 53% of U.S. adults reported their mental health has been adversely affected as a result of COVID-19.

Additionally, the U.S. National Library of Medicine conducted a study among college students in which 71% reported increased stress and anxiety due to COVID-19. Smith County alone holds the highest suicide rate among the top 25 most populous Texas counties, according to a 2015 University of Texas Health study.

"The counselor we have right now is doing an amazing job, but for effectiveness reasons, I do believe we need to hire one or two more counselors," Phinney said. He also said picking up the proposal to the Faculty Senate would be the next step in encouraging the school to hire another counselor.

This semester, TJC has partnered with UT Health East Texas to provide additional mental health services to students. Services will be provided at no further cost to students.

"If TJC counseling office cannot accommodate, the student may be given a number to call and would schedule an 'appointment' with UT Health, or with the student's permission UT Health may contact the student to schedule an appointment," said Dana Ballard, director of campus services at TJC.

Ballard said these psychotherapy and behavioral health services are designed to help students suffering from anxiety, depression, stress, phobias, trauma and various mental conditions. Due to circumstances amid COVID-19, appointments are held via virtual tele-psych services, but some circumstances may warrant an in-person visit.

To schedule a counseling appointment at TJC, students should visit the Counseling Services website at tjc.edu/counseling. Students may also contact Williams, TJC's counselor, at (903) 510-2041 or twil@tjc.edu.

TJC's satellite campuses provide opportunities for vocational students

By Mary Mone
Online Editor

Tyler Junior College is home to five campuses that all work together toward a shared goal: "To provide students with a quality education, a vibrant student life and opportunities for service to the community," according to tjc.edu.

There are two campuses in Tyler, which are the Main Campus and TJC West. The main campus is well known by TJC faculty and students, but many do not know what TJC West offers to the community.

TJC West has three buildings: the Regional Training and Development Complex, the Skills Training Center, and the Energy Center.

Judie Bower, the interim dean of the school of continuing studies at TJC West, spoke about the unique qualities of the opportunities at the west campus.

The RTDC, which is used by the School of Continuing Studies, is 84,000 square feet, contains a large conference room and has registration and fee collection available.

"Formerly known as the Levi Strauss plant, the RTDC building became a regional facility focused on offering workforce training to the community to increase the number of skilled workers in our area as well as serve as a training location for small businesses," Bower said.

The Skills Training Center is 75,000 square feet and "is home to the college's automotive technology and welding technology departments," according to tjc.edu.

The Energy Center, which opened in 2015, is the last building located at TJC West. It is where the power plant technology, HVAC and electrical and electronic controls technology courses take place.

"Located among three unique buildings, TJC West houses both degree and non-degree programs. Degree programs include topics such as Automotive Technology, Welding, Industrial Trades, Vision Care Technology, Child Development/ Early Childhood, Fire Technology and more," Bower said. "The non-degree/ continuing education programs include health care training such as Certified Nurse Aide, Phlebotomy, Medical Assistant and Pharmacy Technician, just to name a few," Bower said.

Not only are there health care and technical degrees that stem from TJC West, but they also provide courses in "computers, foreign languages, law enforcement, business, art, dance and many more that cover a wide spectrum of interests," Bower said.

Not only is there a vast array of opportunities for students, but there are also special opportunities that TJC West offers the community.

"Also housed at TJC West is the Tyler Area Business Incubator that allows start-up companies a place to rent and begin growing their business," Bower said.

Bower spoke about how the start up small businesses have mentors who help them, "develop their products and advise them on best practices until they are ready to expand into their own facilities."

Because TJC West is located in a central place in Tyler, Bower said it provides the community a "resource for job specific, trained students who are looking for employment and serves as a regional hub for business and industry."

To the north, there is a campus in Lindale that opened in 2017. TJC North is located in the Cannery, which is "Lindale's new entertainment/retail/residential complex," according to tjc.edu. At this north campus, they offer the vocational nursing program, the veterinary technician program and also some general education courses.

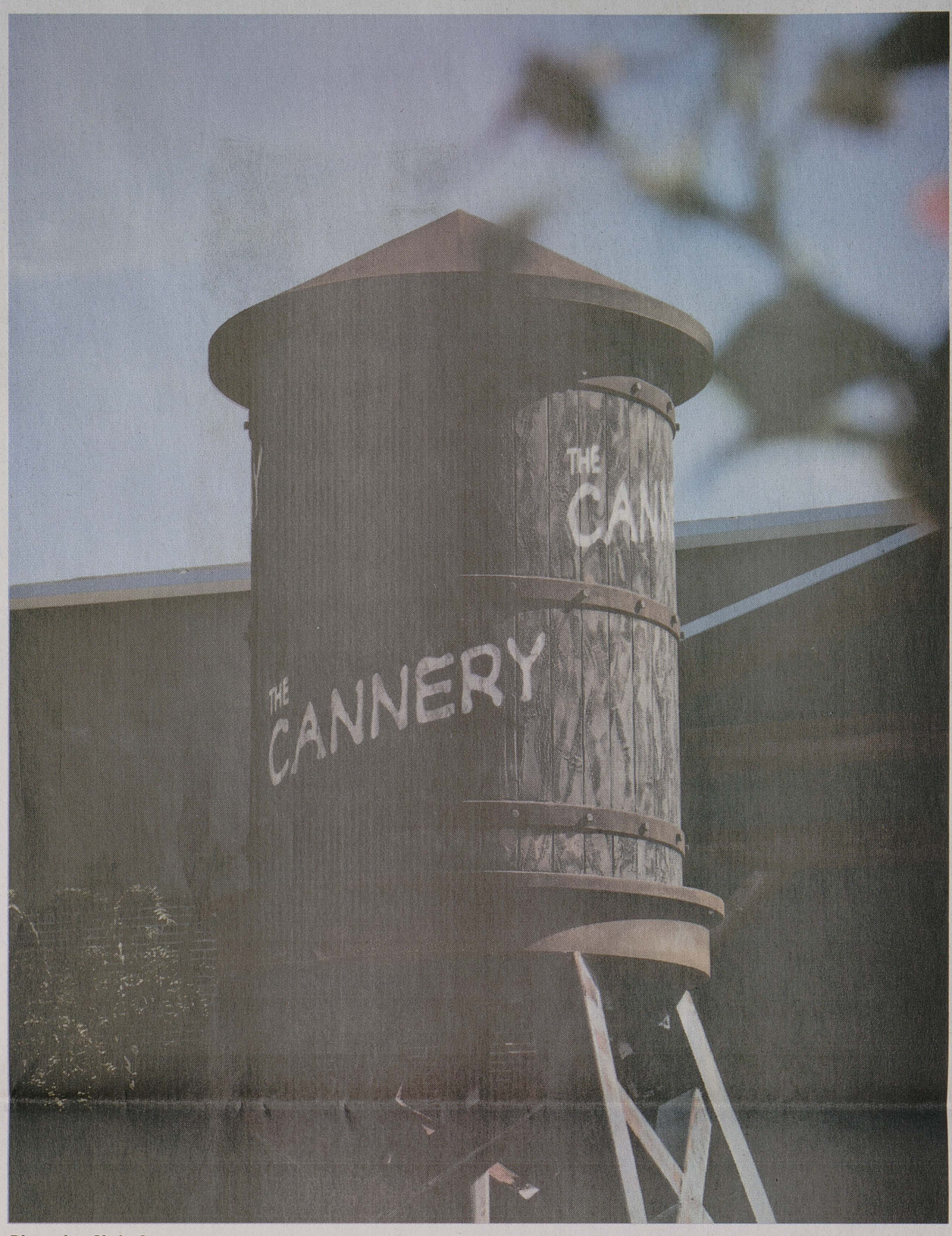


Photo by Chris Swann
The Cannery in Lindale is located near downtown, and it houses many restaurants, shops and TJC's North Campus.

Benjamin Rhodes, operations manager and liaison at TJC North, spoke about the characteristics that make the North campus a good addition to the TJC community.

"First and foremost, access or convenience for those students who live north of I-20," Rhodes said.

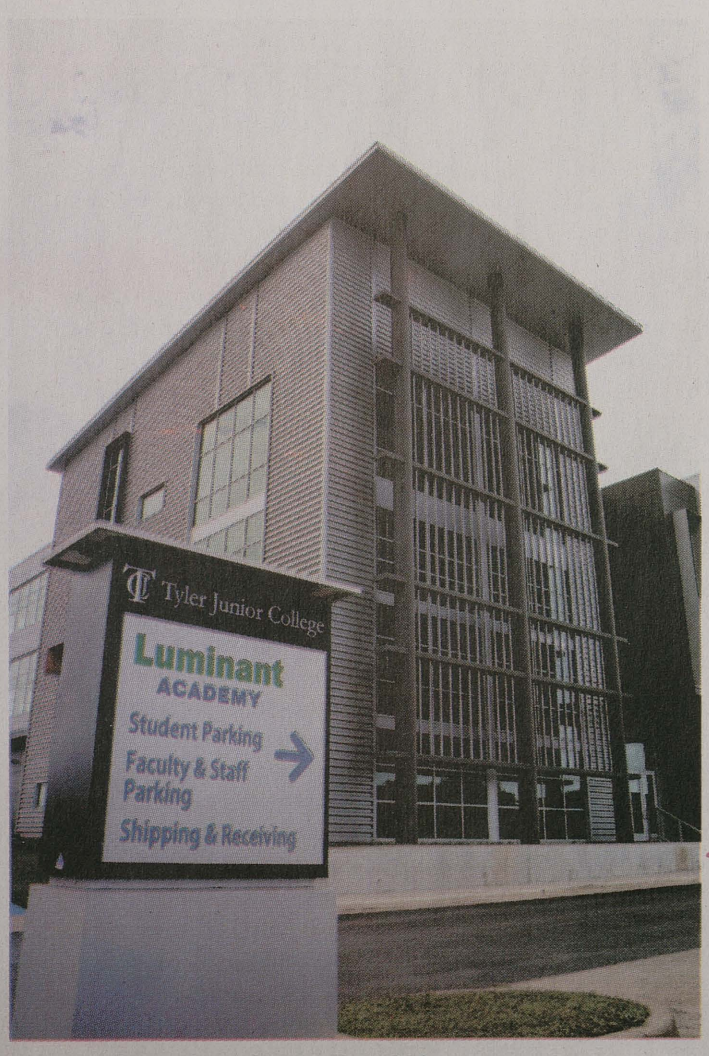
Being north of Tyler, TJC North is closer to towns where commuter students can reach the college easier.

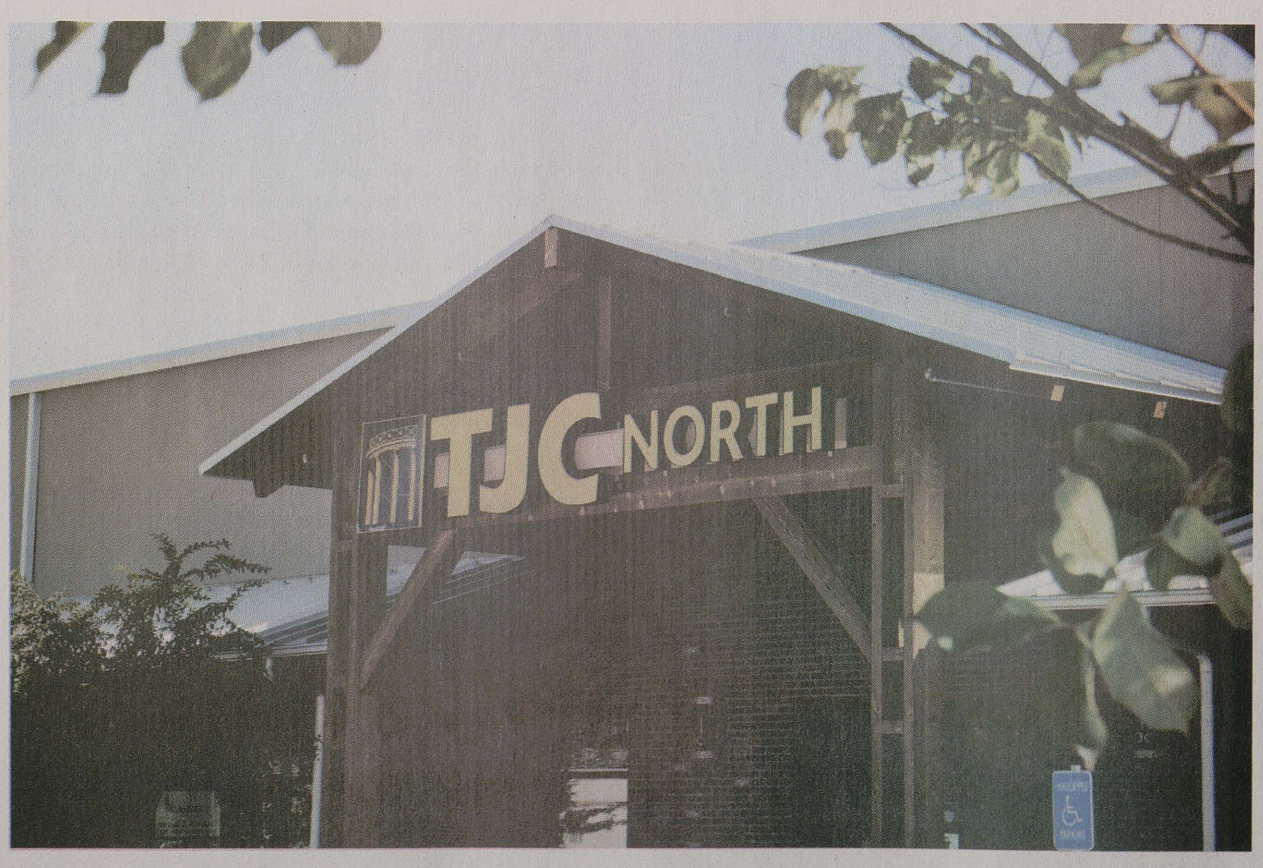
"We're quite a bit closer to Mineola, Alba-Golden, Yantis and those kinds of communities that are a little higher and further away from Tyler in terms of drive. We shorten that drive," Rhodes said.

To the south of Tyler in Jacksonville and Rusk, there are two campuses that provide courses and services to students.

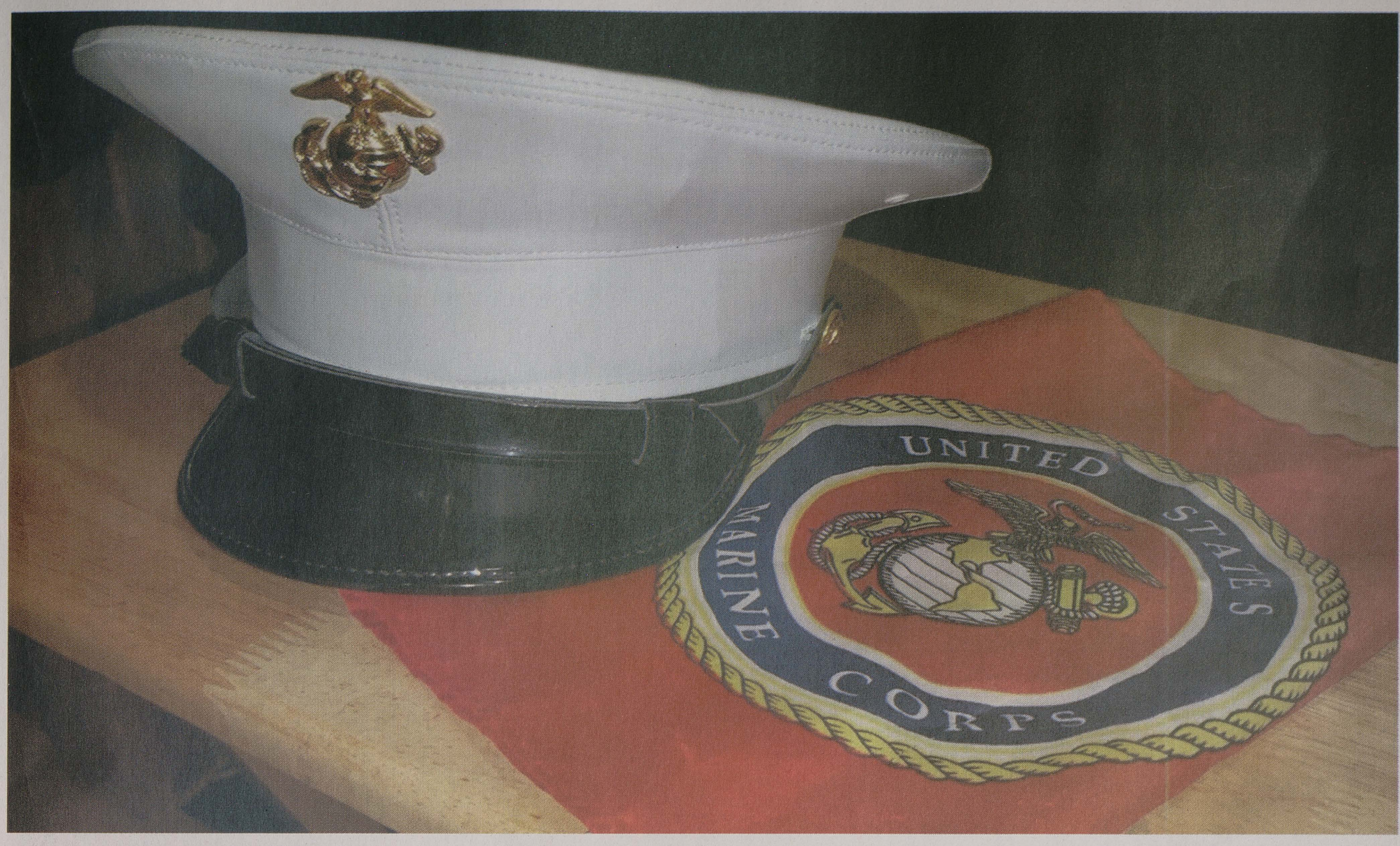
The Jacksonville Campus of TJC is stationed on the fourth floor of the East Texas Medical Center. According to tjc.edu, the Jacksonville Campus, "offers a 20-student vocational nurse education program as well as transitional program for registered nurses who wish to qualify as associate degree nursing graduates."

The Rusk Campus of TJC, which is located on the campus of the Rusk State Hospital, is the newest incorporation of TJC's expansion efforts around the Tyler area. As written on tjc.edu, the Rusk Campus, "offers a 20-student vocational nurse education program to serve East Texas."





Photos by Chris Swann
Above: The TJC North building is located in Lindale, which is right of Highway 69.
Left: The Energy Center at TJC West in Tyler provides space for technical programs.



U.S. Marine Corps celebrates 245 years of service

By Sorayda Rivera
Student Life Editor

For hundreds of years, the U.S. Marine Corps has trained to improvise, adapt and overcome obstacles in situations where needed. This Nov. 10 marks the 245th birthday of the Marine Corps.

Retired veteran Master Sgt. Michael Evans from Houston said he decided to join the Marines because his recruiter offered the opportunity to become a part of a team. He was challenged to do something greater than just a job.

"He convinced me that I could develop traits and principles that would enable me to protect and change the world, and hone leadership skills that could help me improve the lives of my family and community," Evans said.

Every year on Nov. 10 is an opportunity for Marines to celebrate and reflect on the history made by those who came before them. Evans said the Marine's birthday is "a time to formally reaffirm our commitment to God, country, Corps, and revel in thankful glee with fellow Marines that we — past, present and future — all have one heart; and it beats loudly for the United States of America."

During the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress commanded that two battalions, a large body of troops ready for battle, be developed to help fight in the war and thus began the Marines.

According to marines.com, since 1775 the Marines have fought in numerous battles to defend the American constitution, protect its people and stabilize the world in a time of crisis.

Veteran Sgt. Miguel Angel Garcia, who is an East Texan native, explained what being a Marine means to him.

"Being a Marine to me is always doing the right thing and always stepping up when you see others in need. Even if you're no longer in the service, the Marine in you never leaves. It's ingrained in you," Garcia said.

Garcia served for six years in the Marines and said the most important lesson he learned was how to be accountable for his own actions, whether they're good or bad.

While the Marine Corps Birthday is not observed as a holiday by post office and bank closures, Nov. 10 is observed as an "internal" military holiday where past and present Marines can commemorate together.

Garcia said the Marine's birthday means celebrating the day the Marine Corps came alive. It means "being with a rare breed of individuals who took that challenge to become a part of the few and earned the title Marine," Garcia said. "It's a time we can all just be brothers and sisters and celebrate regardless of rank and just have a good time and be proud of being Marines."

Every year to celebrate the birthday, Marines host a Birthday Ball, which is held all over the world to honor and celebrate their legacy, as stated on marines.com.

According to marinesbenefit.info, the earliest known Birthday Ball took place in Philadelphia in 1925. It has since transformed into an elaborate and tradition-filled day celebrated at military bases in America and abroad.

The Birthday Ball includes a ceremony with speeches, dinner and cake cutting. The first piece of cake is normally given to the guest of honor, and the second piece is given to the oldest Marine in attendance then passed to the youngest. This tradition signifies the passing of experience and knowledge from the old Marines to the young, according to marines.com.

Evans said his fondest memories of the Birthday Ball are having about 15 family and friends join him at the ball and dancing the night away with his niece and godkids.

Now that he is a retired Marine, Evans said he sometimes still attends active Marine unit birthday balls.

"I join the birthday celebration with the Marine Corps League or Marine Corps Association," Evans said. "I meet with one or a few other Marines for cake and a toast, and all of the usual reflections of our family of misfits."

In the 23 years and 11 months Evans devoted his life to the Marine Corps, he said the most important lesson he learned is "love is the real key to leading and the reason anyone should set out to do anything."

"Love of family, friends, community, country, and ultimately humanity will motivate and energize you to succeed at anything. Knowing that we're all connected and that having a duty of care to everyone around you with love as the guiding principle encourages you to do the right thing, for the right reason, at the right time."

Student Life director tackles event planning amid COVID-19

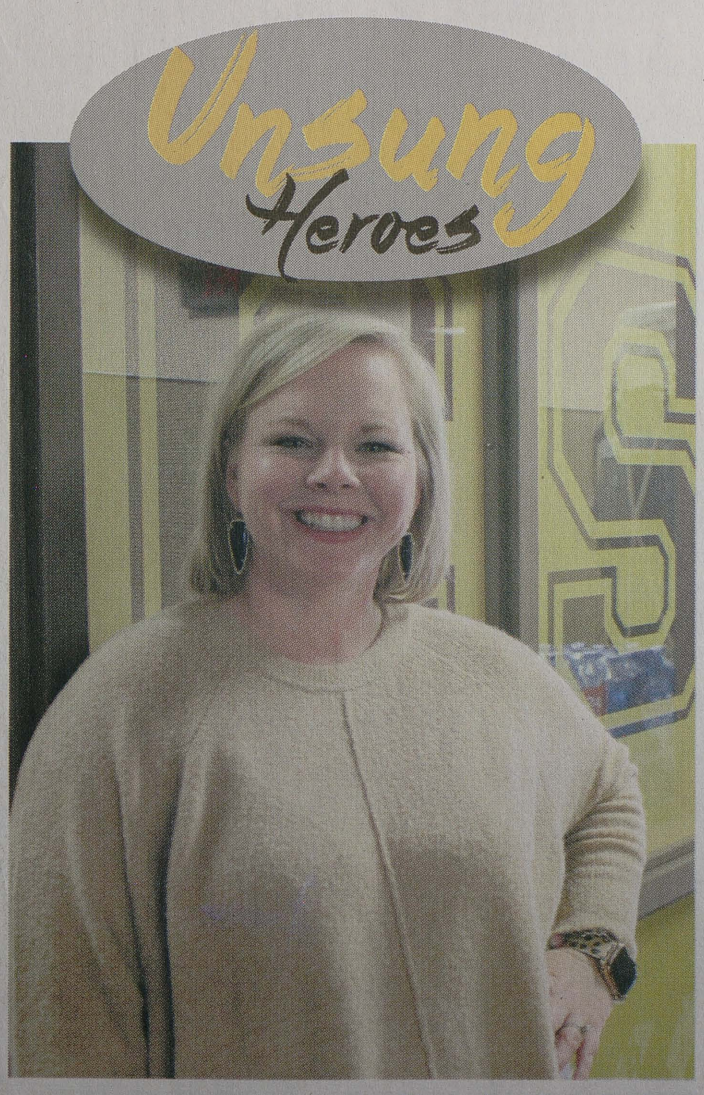


Photo by Victoria Deal

This is the fourth feature in a series highlighting the "unsung heroes" of TJC. Lauren Tyler was selected for her work in Student Life.

By Brianna Murphy
Staff Writer

New and returning students may struggle to find a sense of community. Student life provides events and creates life-long connections to help students get the full Tyler Junior College experience.

Lauren Tyler, director of student life, coordinates plans that provide the community many students long for on campus.

Tyler graduated with a bachelor's from Stephen F. Austin State University and a master's in human resource development from the University of Texas at Tyler.

Before working at TJC, she worked in multiple offices at SFA as a mentor. She also worked at the Student Life Association, where she discovered her passion in planning events to provide exciting experiences to students.

"I really enjoyed college and the college experience and thought I wanted to work at one, and started here in advising, and then moved into student life when there was an opportunity," Tyler said.

With the pandemic, Tyler said working in student life has been a tedious learning process.

Tyler said, "in a normal semester we are planning for events, booking caterers, and [hiring] all the different vendors." Due to COVID-19, "this semester of course looks different because it is more virtual."

As an event planner, Tyler has faced difficulties in trying to connect to students through their screens.

"The lack of interaction is hard because it is not really the experience we normally get at TJC," Tyler said.

Students face screen fatigue, making it hard for them to want to join online events. Additionally, Student Life hopes to provide a safe set of events so they can get back to the "new normal." Lauren said both she and student life employees continue to stay optimistic for the future of activities and events.

Tyler said in Student Life, the heart of tradition is what shines through events and activities.

"Our office really works to try and have traditions and continue some of those traditions and create new ones," Tyler said.

Through all the fun and exciting activities, Tyler's favorite events are Homecoming week and the Ya-A-Te Leadership Retreat.

Running programs offers variety to both coordinators and students. On the job, every day is different, and Tyler enjoys meeting students through programs and fellowship.

In the future, as COVID-19 calms down, student life plans to host more events in the Spring. These events include the 10th annual 50-Gallon Challenge and 12 sports running at the same time.

With the excitement toward spring, Tyler said TJC will still incorporate online events for at-home students. Tyler said, "we will keep online options" and "hope to have a good mix of events."

Student life takes pride in being able to provide students with life-changing opportunities.

"The experience that our students have outside the classroom is what sets TJC apart from other institutions," Tyler said. "Hopefully students meet their new best friend, maybes it's just helping their mood, giving them an escape — we feel our office offers that."

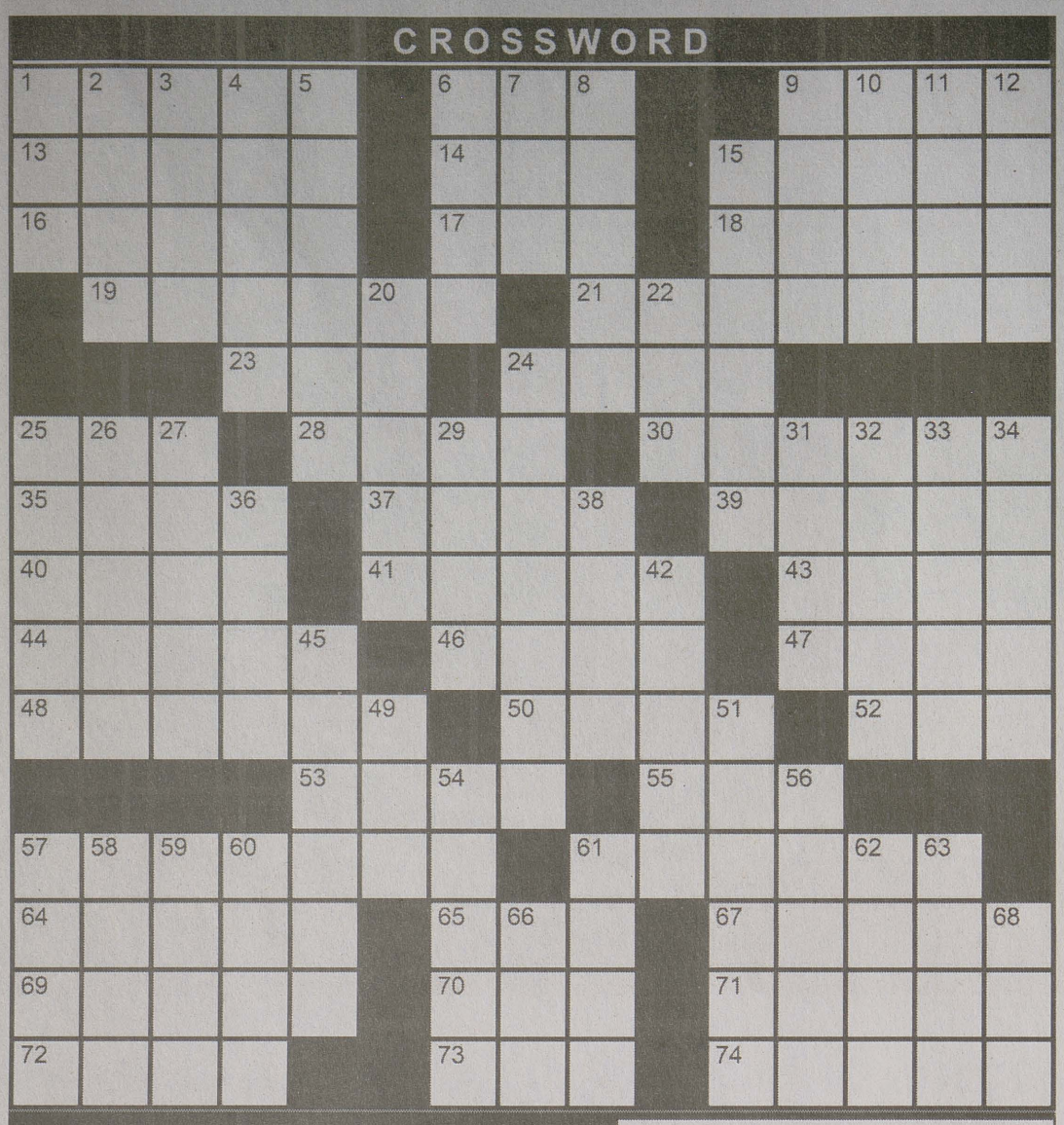
Many students come to TJC to benefit from these aspects and enjoy the culture and sports campus offers. "A lot of times we have students that say they came here for the experience," Tyler said

Tyler and student life staff members help keep the heart of TJC a focus for events and activities.

Caitlian Ibarra, coordinator of Student Life, said over the years Tyler has been a great leader. "She has brought in new and innovative ways to get students involved," Ibarra said. "She makes a huge impact with student life all over campus."

THEME: Cartoon Characters

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. Brocadopa or Larodopa
6. They are often covert
9. Used for watering
13. Vexed
14. Took the bait
15. Spot for boutonniËre
16. Old West pack animal
17. Big-headedness
18. Render harmless
19. *Bamm-Bamm's dad
21. *Angelica, Tommy and Dil
23. Opposite of yang
24. Archipelago unit
25. Solemn pledge
28. Depletes
30. Works, as in a bakery
35. Kind of beige
37. Hammer or sickle
39. ____ firma
40. Lecherous look
41. Computer key
43. Lure for a dieter, on a package
44. Tropical smoothie flavor
46. Health club offering
47. Hourglass filler
48. Popular saint's name
50. Pea ____, pl.
52. Limit, to some
53. Peace symbol
55. Like King George, 1760-1820
57. *Ill-tempered fourth-grader's last name
61. *Beast Boy and Starfire
64. Rossini's offering
65. Lobe locale
67. Sure sign of fire
69. Pretend, two words
70. Number cruncher, acr.
71. Lusitania destroyer
72. Gave the boot
73. Pivotal
74. Santa Maria's companion

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SUDOKU

				7		1		4
				6	4			5
			8				7	
	1				2			9
	7		3		9		5	
3			6				2	
	2				1			
5			4	8				
6		9		2				

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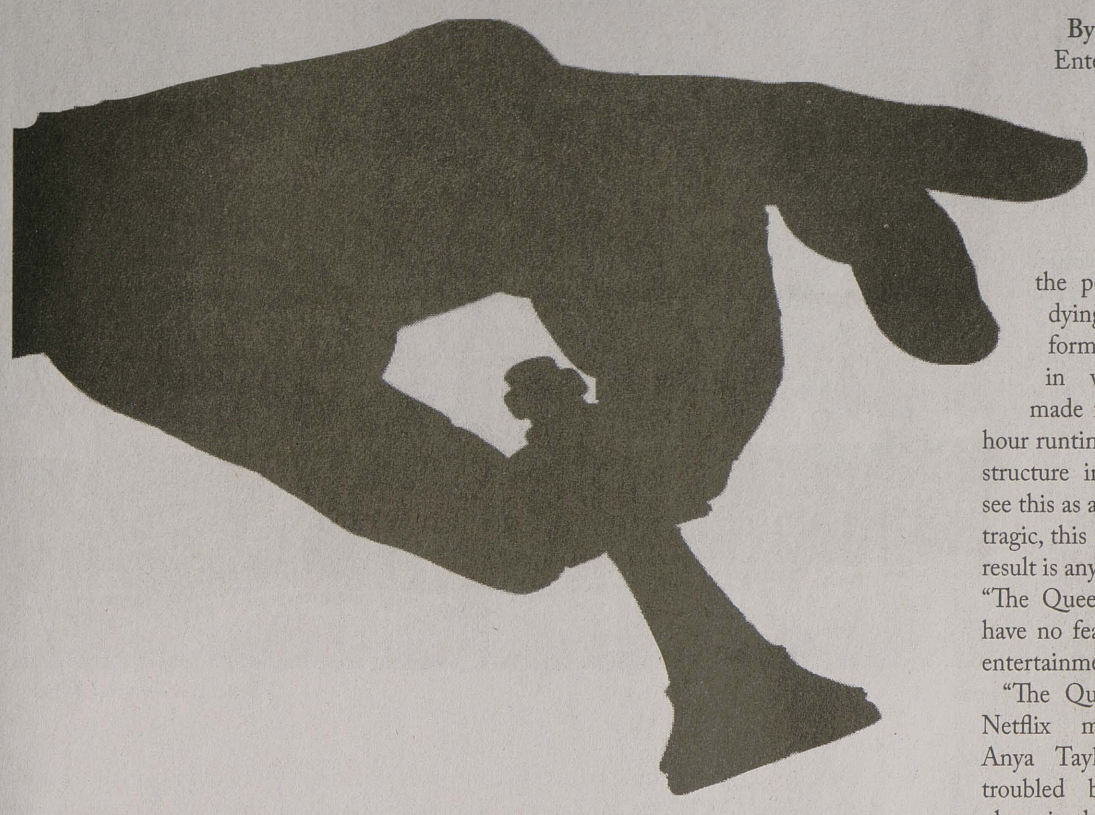
Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

DOWN

1. Party choice, abbr.
2. Clobber
3. Southern stew staple
4. *Stepbrothers' bipedal platypus
5. Apollo Creed's son
6. Toe the line
7. *Peppa's or George's last name
8. "The buck ____ here"
9. *King of the Hill
10. Milky-white gem
11. Dry as dust
12. Popular street-lining trees
15. Aglow
20. Related on mother's side
22. Type
24. Carbon-12 or carbon-13
25. *The "brains" of Scooby-Doo's group
26. Billy of '80s Billboard charts
27. Small songbirds
29. *Pinky Pie or Fluttershy
31. Unagi, pl.
32. A in A=ab, pl.
33. Did it to Kool-Aid
34. *Land mammal in Bikini Bottom
36. Give a pep talk
38. *Emmet Brickowski's brick
42. Spokes of a wheel, e.g.
45. *Mr. Magoo or Mr. Burns, e.g.
49. Bygone bird of New Zealand
51. Opposite of 'lies down'
54. Sweater style
56. More than one iamb
57. Float liquid
58. Mt. Everest to Earth
59. Network of nerves
60. Walked on
61. Cafeteria carrier
62. High part of day
63. 3-handed card game
66. *Magilla Gorilla, e.g.
68. Pilot's announcement

Crossword and Sudoku solutions will be online at thedrumbeat.com.

Review: 'The Queen's Gambit' battles for control



Graphic by Michael Bald

By Michael Bald
Entertainment Editor

There have been recent debates over the past couple of years discussing the possibility of movies dying. Not the actual art form, but the structure in which movies are made from a regular two-hour runtime into a mini-series structure instead. While I do see this as a possibility and a bit tragic, this could happen. If the result is anything like the recent "The Queen's Gambit" then I have no fear for the quality of entertainment to come.

"The Queen's Gambit" is a Netflix mini-series starring Anya Taylor-Joy as a very troubled but brilliant chess player in the late 1960s and her quest to top the ranks of the world's best players.

Netflix recently made a movie called "Enola Holmes" where the main character was flawless in every aspect, which made her not very memorable. I was clearly not a fan. Not here, though. Not in "The Queen's Gambit." Not only did Taylor-Joy give the best performance of her career playing the main character, but she felt like a real person.

One of the best aspects of the show is that it is a deep character study about an orphaned girl who has had to rely on herself to make it through life without any real role models. Throughout the show, she relies on alcohol and other substances in order to cope with her loneliness.

As she makes it up the ranks in various competitions, she realizes there are lots of people around her who want to help her, and she doesn't have to be alone anymore. It's a simple arc and premise but super effective.

On a deeper level, I feel as if the show is a lesson about humans and control or lack thereof. The main character has always relied on herself; she uses chess as an escape because it's the only thing in her world that she has complete control of. Not only is it an arc of her growing to appreciate the people around her, but also accepting what happened to her and her past.

Another genius aspect of the show is the way it depicts the mines of world-renowned chess players. It's written in a way where it makes you feel smart as you're watching it. The way she comes up with the next moves she wants to play and a game she looks at the ceiling and imagines multiple different ways the game could go and knows exactly what move to make based on the other player's decision. The main character's deduction skills are so fast it makes the viewer feel as if they can do the same thing in the same scenario.

"The Queen's Gambit" is an excellent mini-series and character study. It's only seven parts and each of them is around 48 minutes, but when you watch it, it feels as if time flies by. It's a great introduction to the world of chess and an excellent character study.

Review: 'Supernatural' final season ends phenomenal era

By Emily Niebuhr
Student Life Editor

It has been a hot minute since I talked about a TV show, so let us go for a ride. If you do not know what "Carry on My Wayward Son" means, then you are missing out on a horror action show. I am talking about CW's "Supernatural," which aired 15 years ago on Sept. 13, 2005.

I started watching the show in 2015 when I had ankle surgery and could not go anywhere since I was in a cast and used a wheelchair for several months. I did not know what I was in for watching it, but ever since I started till now I have re-watched the series many times. You know it is an amazing show when you can watch it again.

Here is the back story of "Supernatural" without spilling any spoilers. According to imdb.com "Two brothers follow their father's footsteps as hunters, fighting evil supernatural beings of many kinds, including monsters, demons, and gods that roam the Earth." This show has many roller coasters, so bring the tissues out.

Jared Padalecki (Sam), Jensen Ackles (Dean) and Misha Collins (Castiel) will steal your heart, and hopefully, you will be invested with the show like I am. The acting on the show is magical, and you will be hooked. There are episodes that are scary, so beware, but many are funny, which makes you forget it is a horror/fantasy show.

Photo courtesy of Radio Times

I like to say when I started in 2015, I was in a low place so watching "Supernatural" brought me hope and joy back into my life. I learned from the show that family comes first, live in the moment, have salt handy, and pie is always the answer.

Every episode is like Halloween since the show is about monsters, ghosts, demons and other supernatural creatures. This show means a lot to me with every cast member and watching their characters develop over the years. You can see by the acting how much they put into each of the episodes. I will always be thankful for the show and what it has taught me in my life. The show has brought tears, laughs and joy to me.

Do not forget to check it out on Netflix and their last four episodes on Thursday nights on CW. I hate to see it coming to an end and having to say goodbye to the characters who I've enjoyed watching and love. You can count on me using the whole tissue box on the finale. They had an amazing run, especially having 15 seasons under them. I know they are proud of what they have created for us fans and will always remember it. It is crazy to see how many fans they have all over the world and how one show brings us together. It is amazing to see how they brought "Supernatural" to life and can not forget the guys in the show are good looking, so that is a plus.

Thank you for coming with me on this ride, and always check your backseat for monsters.

Review: 'The Trial of the Chicago 7:' Sorkin heads notable drama

By Chris Crymes
Page Editor

Another month, another batch of Netflix originals. While some, myself included, tend to be critical of the streaming platform's in-house releases, Netflix has been taking full advantage of COVID-19's war of theaters with some of the best releases of the year. With excellent Netflix-distributed films like "I'm Thinking of Ending Things" and "The Devil All the Time" in recent memory, I was excited for Aaron Sorkin's timely feature: "The Trial of the Chicago 7."

"The Trial of the Chicago 7" recounts the real trial of 7 people of various backgrounds for charges surrounding altercations of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Illinois. This is an inspiring story of American's who were put through infuriating injustice at the hands of their own government, a story of protests with peaceful intentions being turned into warzones and a story that needs to be told right now. I'm not entirely sure Sorkin was the person to tell this story, though.

Sorkin has an incredible talent for the written word. With "The Social Network," his patented monologues delivered perfect gravity to what can only be called a real-life super villain origin. The script for "Steve Jobs" gives maybe the realest light of a man shrouded by technological myth with conversation. "The Trial of the Chicago 7" offers up some genuinely funny back and forths as well as some of the relevant social commentary of the year. I can praise the man's literary merit all day, but Sorkin is far from perfect.

His scripts are dense with prose and his characters think of themselves almost as highly as their writer does. This works for darkly cynical depictions of moguls with dicey histories, but hits some stumbling blocks for the Chicago 7.

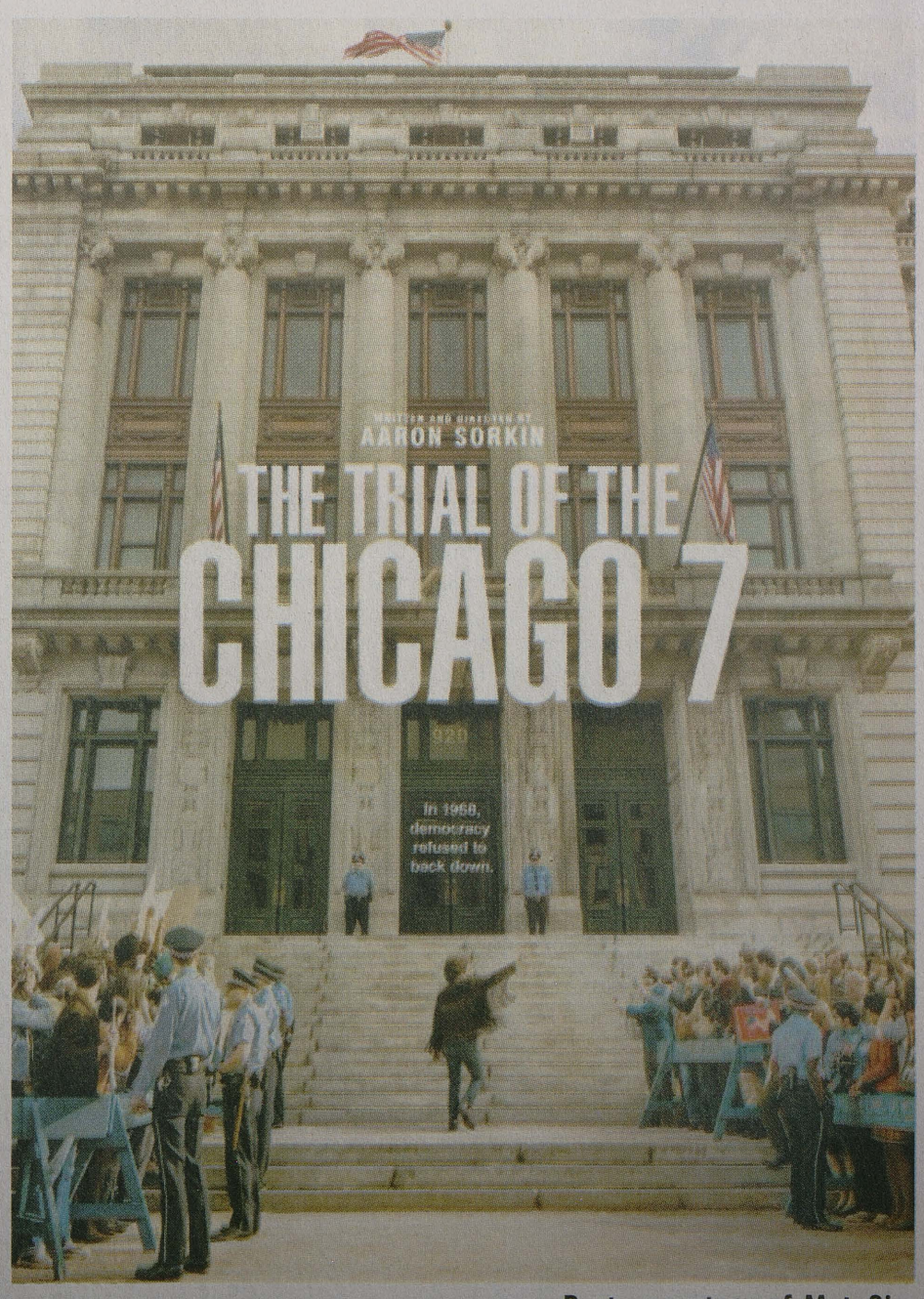
The script for "The Trial of the Chicago 7" is filled with Sorkin's aforementioned monologues and zingers. Characters send verbal barbs across the courtroom to no end with everyone seemingly having a degree in snappy comebacks. While entertaining, this becomes an issue when the serious message of political activism is weighed down by literally every character with a speaking role having something to say on every single page. Both Sorkin's writing and directing throughout this latest venture are just a little too preoccupied with making the events of the trial sharp and slick to realize what is actually being shown on screen. It's as if Sorkin is worried his audience is going to get bored, so he either just keeps talking or makes a snappy editing choice. Take the film's opening for instance.

We are presented with the central characters making serious plans for protests before the inciting incidents of the Democratic Convention of 1968. Quick, intercut sequences of characters talking in urgent tones, which is all well and good until you hear the oddly upbeat score working against the dialogue. As frustrating as instances like these were, they aren't in the majority.

Some of these editing choices are very powerful, though. Like multiple uses of characters narrating previously unseen events of the riots and altercations with Chicago Police Department that combine some masterful acting on display with heart wrenching visuals. This back and forth more than keeps the film afloat, rescuing it from the drowning that is an overly long Aaron Sorkin written scene.

A pure positive of the film is the cast that's filled to the brim with nothing but pure talent. Highlights include Eddie Redmayne, Sacha Baron Cohen, Yahya Abdul-Mateen II and Mark Rylance. It's blatantly obvious everyone on screen cares so much about the events being told, making each character palpable with life.

Almost every good aspect of "The Trial of the Chicago 7" has a grain of salt, but if you're in the mood for maybe the best courtroom drama of the year that also has ties to today's political landscape, give it a watch on Netflix tonight.



Poster courtesy of Metaflix

Student theatre adapts in COVID-19 semester

By Chris Crymes
Page Editor

If there is one general field hit hardest by COVID-19's residence this year, it's the entertainment industry — specifically, live performance. With The New York Times reporting the new high of daily cases in America peaking at over 99,000 on Oct. 30, the idea of performing or taking in live performances seems to drift further away. Tyler Junior College's Performing Arts Department is fighting this every step of the way with as much hands-on learning and safely distanced productions as possible.

"First and foremost, we didn't stop doing theatre. We just stopped public performances. So, right now we're on hold to the public but not to the TJC theatre family. Anyone involved in a theatre class can come to watch our closed shows," said Denise Weatherly-Green, director and theatre professor.

TJC theatre does already have several small-scale shows under their belt this semester. From plays in the Jean Browne Theatre, "The Drowning Girls" and "God of Carnage," to live readings of William Inge's one act plays in the TJC Woodlands parking lot space, it's difficult to imagine how one goes about mounting a production during times like these. Setting up the theatre for social distanced seating and sanitation is one thing, but blocking and movement is another challenge.

"The whole way we're staging is social-distanced. For plays, the blocking is set up where the actors never come within six feet of each other and they wear face shields," Weatherly-Green said.

For readings, Weatherly-Green explained students stay in their designated space and use the props in that area.

Despite going through the mind-boggling production process like this, many theatre classes are not being held in TJC's theatre complex. This can put a damper on the hands-on nature of learning theatre.

"If I take you out of the theatrical space, you miss half of your education. Everything we do in design, everything we do in mounting a production absolutely has everything to do with the space that you're in," Weatherly-Green said. "We're going to keep giving as much education to the students in the instances that we're given."

For anyone in any kind of theatre class, TJC theatre has "The Fantasticks," featuring live music, opening the week before Thanksgiving, Nov. 16-20.

Next semester, TJC theatre productions will include a reversal of fairy tale tropes, "Disenchanted," the existential classic "No Exit," and "Daddy's Dyin: Who's Got the Will?," a dark comedy. All have auditions open to any full-time, part-time or dual credit student at TJC.

One last way to get involved in performing is called "Venue," a live coffee house open-mic sponsored by TJC's oldest organization: Las Mascaras. An interested student can perform potentially any kind of piece, whether it's a song, dance, instrumental piece or poetry. "Venue" is held outdoors in the parking lot of Apache Woodlands.

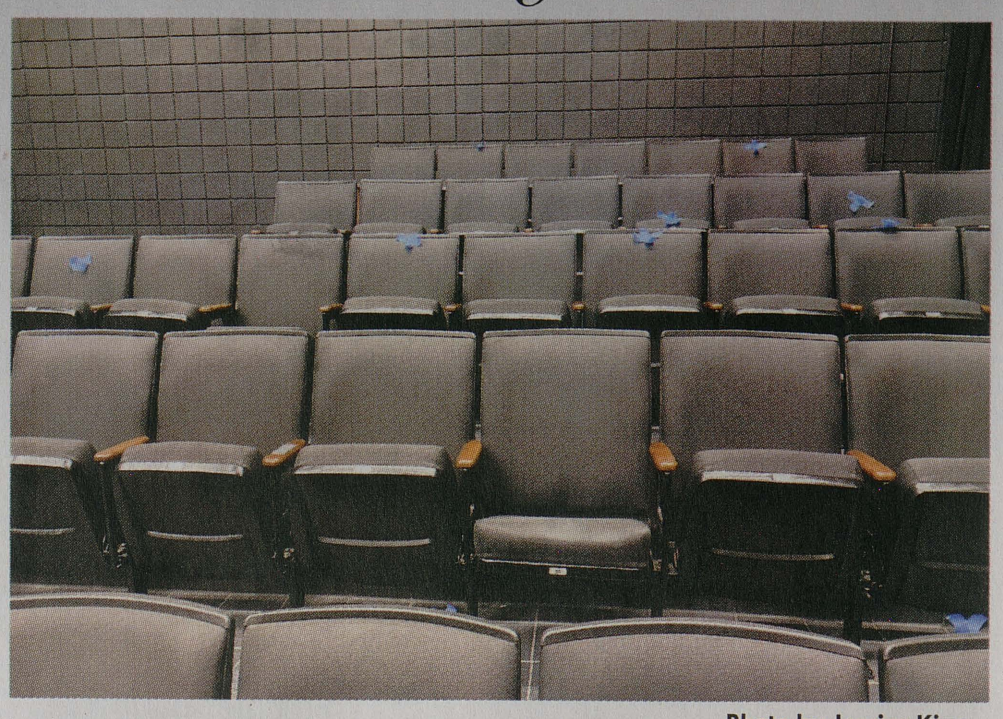


Photo by Jessica King

Hispanic Student Organization brings people together to celebrate culture

By Karla Vallejo
Contributing Writer

Photo by Karla Vallejo

In America, the Hispanic population is nearly about 60.48 million according to the U.S. Census. In Texas alone there are about 11.1 million Hispanics, according to the U.S. Census.

At TJC, there are different organizations that help students become a better person. They also teach students how to be successful in the future. The Hispanic Student Organization at TJC is offered throughout the campus for anyone who would like to join.

Brianna Arteaga, a sophomore at TJC and who is also the 2020-21 president for the organization, said, "It's so much pride being Hispanic. There's so much culture that comes with it. Beautiful people, beautiful music, and beautiful places. It's amazing how different people from all over the world appreciate our heritage and how they show so much love no matter what ethnicity, race and country they're from."

HSO is helpful for the students at TJC, because overall the organization itself is to help and motivate their members to be the best that they can be, Arteaga said. Student success and engagement while in school is important because Arteaga knows that for first-generation college students school can be hard. She also mentions that a student's determination is important because everybody knows college isn't easy, and she wants students to be proud of being the best and being Latinos.

"I'd say that the one thing our students will learn and bring into this world from this organization is nothing but pride. Sometimes, as Latinos, we tend to feel out of place and not feel confident enough," Arteaga said. "So, the goal, if they take anything out from being in this organization, is for them to be proud of who they are and where they come from and to encourage others to do and feel the same."

Bibi Carrasco, a sophomore at TJC who is a part of HSO, also said she is thrilled to be a member of such an amazing organization.

"I am amazed how far I have come, from not speaking English to graduating top 10 of my senior class to being where I am today," Carrasco said. "It's amazing how much our culture brings to the world and I am honored to be a part of the Hispanic heritage."

Registration opens soon

By Sorayda Rivera
Student Life Editor

Registration for winter and spring begins on Nov. 15. Students can register for classes by logging into their Apache Access account. From the student home page, click the "Add/Drop Classes" icon.

Next, select the term needed. Students can search for classes by using the course subject and course number. Once the class is found, click the check mark box to the left and click the "Register" button.

To select a class, check the box to the right of the class. If a "C" appears where a box should be this means the class is closed.

To know what classes to take or for more information contact advising at 903-510-3287, TJCAdvising@tjc.edu or on the 2nd floor of the Rogers Student Center.

Students hone English skills through workshops

By Mary Mone
Online Editor

Throughout the semester, Apache Tutoring at Tyler Junior College has been hard at work hosting workshops to help students with their writing techniques.

The workshops cover a variety of topics concerning English, and they are held on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. At 5:30 p.m. on Monday, there is a Zoom call, which one can register for on OrgSync. Around 5:30 p.m. every Tuesday, there is a Zoom call and a simultaneous face-to-face meeting in the Quest Classroom in Vaughn Library. At 2:30 p.m. on Thursday, there is a Zoom meeting and a face-to-face meeting in the library, as well.

Nicole Hicks, a writing support specialist at TJC who designs and presents all writing-specific workshops, spoke on her position and the different topics they host.

"I focus on all writing specific workshops, and Tiffany Thompson, our learning support specialist, gives workshops on a variety of learning support topics, including reading and studying strategies, stress management and test taking tips," Hicks said.

The way these workshops help develop individual's understanding of English concepts is important, but the overall effect of them on the community creates an atmosphere of excellence around English.

"Students hear from a super enthusiastic presenter about common writing problems and get to practice what they learn then and there, which can improve their writing in class and beyond," Hicks said. "They get to ask questions about tricky concepts and receive an immediate response from a real person instead of Google, Siri or Alexa."

Hicks spoke about how the sessions benefit students because they make a bridge between the classroom and writing tutoring. Because professors may struggle to cover everything in the classroom, the tutoring center looks at potential gaps, which could be topics for the workshops, and plan around those for the semester.

With the semester coming close to ending, Apache Tutoring workshops are a resource within the campus community that may help many students prepare for their finals.

Apache Tutoring has hosted many successful events, such as a grammar and punctuation workshop, MLA style and APA style workshops, resume making workshops, formatting and citation workshops, and more.

Students must register beforehand to attend workshops via Zoom, but any student is welcome to attend the face-to-face sessions with no prior registration.

Upcoming Events

Harry Potter and Friends Trivia
Tuesday, Nov. 10
7 p.m.

Learning workshops

Test Taking Tips
Tuesday, Nov. 10
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 11
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Active Reading for Success
Wednesday, Nov. 11
1 - 2 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 12
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Final Exam Prep
Tuesday, Nov. 17
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Wednesday, Nov. 18
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Writing Workshops

APA Style 7
Monday, Nov. 9
Formatting
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 10
Citations
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 12
Research
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Creating a Resume
Monday, Nov. 16
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, Nov. 17
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, Nov. 19
2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

Column: Campus health options do not meet students' needs, lack adequate basic services

By Madison Heiser
Editor-in-Chief

I am uninsured. A few weeks ago, on a Friday night after the school clinic closed for the weekend, I faced an unprecedented medical issue that couldn't wait to be addressed. I called my friend to take me to the local urgent care clinic, where the doctor ran a few tests and sent me off with an antibiotic. For a 15-minute visit without insurance, I was billed $360.

This is an all-too-common occurrence for college students whose financial situations make it difficult, or even impossible, to obtain health insurance. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, a nonprofit organization focused on national health issues, uninsured individuals paid an average of $752 out of pocket for medical services in 2014, compared to $236 in expenses for individuals with public health coverage. Additionally, hospitals and other medical service providers charge uninsured patients at higher costs, placing them at further risk for financial strain and medical debt.

According to PayScale, the average rent in Tyler is $871 a month, and the average phone bill is $207 a month. For a student working part time at minimum wage, even with roommates, the cost of living is high enough. Under these conditions, most students cannot afford private health insurance and cannot purchase coverage through their part-time employers. So, when an unprecedented medical bill hits, it can be devastating.

Tyler Junior College has provided limited health care options for its students, but these services only include a small array of treatment and testing procedures.

"TJC students have access to the TJC clinic located in the Rogers Nursing and Health Sciences Center," said Rebecca Sanders, director of public affairs and media relations at TJC. "The on-campus clinic is staffed by UT Health East Texas, and services are funded by student health fees." The student health fee is $35 per semester and pays for health care and counseling services on campus.

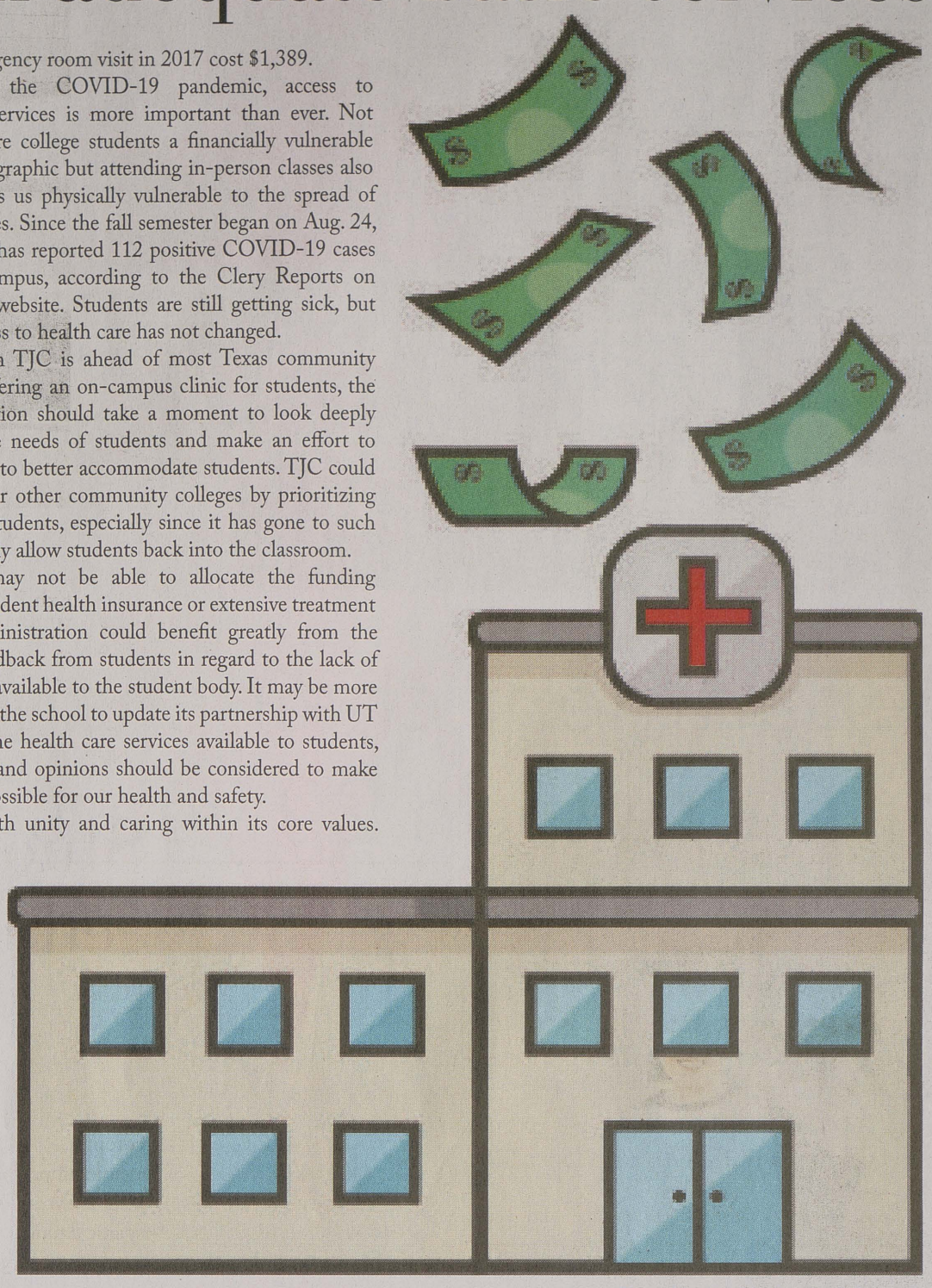
According to the TJC clinic website, these services include some diagnostic and testing procedures, immunizations and treatment for minor injuries and illnesses. However, in the event of an emergency, students may only rely on potentially unavailable private health insurance and personal income to pay for their expenses. According to the Health Care Cost Institute, the average emergency room visit in 2017 cost $1,389.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, access to health services is more important than ever. Not only are college students a financially vulnerable demographic but attending in-person classes also makes us physically vulnerable to the spread of viruses. Since the fall semester began on Aug. 24, TJC has reported 112 positive COVID-19 cases on campus, according to the Clery Reports on TJC's website. Students are still getting sick, but our access to health care has not changed.

Although TJC is ahead of most Texas community colleges by offering an on-campus clinic for students, the college's administration should take a moment to look deeply into the health care needs of students and make an effort to revamp its offerings to better accommodate students. TJC could set the precedent for other community colleges by prioritizing the wellness of its students, especially since it has gone to such great lengths to safely allow students back into the classroom.

Although TJC may not be able to allocate the funding necessary to offer student health insurance or extensive treatment options, TJC's administration could benefit greatly from the consideration of feedback from students in regard to the lack of health care services available to the student body. It may be more financially viable for the school to update its partnership with UT Health to expand the health care services available to students, but students' needs and opinions should be considered to make the best decisions possible for our health and safety.

TJC professes both unity and caring within its core values. Directly addressing the needs of its students and finding the best possible solution to their deepest concerns is the duty of the school. With the health and well-being of students in question, it is time for TJC to step up to the plate and better aid students in meeting their fundamental needs.



Graphic by Molly Swisher

Column: Overcoming academic barriers in 2020

By Sorayda Rivera
Student Life Editor

It's astonishing to believe how this year is almost over. 2020 for most has seemed like a never-ending nightmare. The good news is we are just weeks away from saying goodbye to all of the torment and craziness this year has brought.

I remember how hard of a time I had at the beginning of spring 2020. I was a returning non-traditional aged student, and I felt like I was way in over my head. I was already stressed out way before this whole COVID-19 thing made its debut.

There came a point during that time when I thought maybe school isn't for me. This was my fourth attempt at college and it felt like it would be my last. However, there was something inside of me that wouldn't let me give up, so I kept going.

Then the pandemic struck, then came more stress. I had to figure out how to do the whole online school thing (which is not my favorite), but also there was the ominous feeling that if we go out we could get sick and possibly die!

Honestly, my stress tank felt like it was filled to the max, but somehow I managed to be able to keep going. I know this is a played out cliche, but I believe it now more than ever. What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.

I am a true testament to that cheesy cliche. I restarted my journey for my associate degree in January 2020, and it is now November and I am still here in one piece.

There are still days when I wake up and just the thought of getting out of bed makes me cringe, but I do it anyway. I know if I don't keep going, the only one who that decision will affect is me.

I do it for me. I have my goals set out, and I am determined to accomplish them. I have come way too far to give up now.

This year I have overcome academic barriers and hurdles like never before. Once 2020 is over and done with, I will have one more semester to go, and I will finally be able to say that I, Sorayda Rivera, will finally be a college graduate.

Those are words I never even imagined myself saying, but I now believe more than ever that I will make it happen. I will graduate with my associate degree in public relations from TJC, and I will move on to work on my bachelor's degree.

I know there are great things in store for my future. Even though I don't know what those things are yet, I will keep making myself better, and I will be prepared for when my moment comes. I will continue to strive, and I will make great things happen. Not depression, not COVID-19, and not even my Spinal Muscular Atrophy will stop me.

One of my favorite motivational speakers, Les Brown says, "If you take responsibility for yourself, you will develop a hunger to accomplish your dream." I am starving!

There is a fire burning inside of me full of determination and strength to finish school, and I will not let it burn out.

Have an opinion?

Share it with us by writing a guest column or a letter to the editor.

If you are interested in sharing, here's what you need to know.

- The DrumBeat invites its readers to share views by writing letters to the editor.
- All contributions will be edited for grammar, spelling, length (300 words maximum), profanity and personal attacks.
- All letters must include the author's name, address, telephone number and academic classification.
- Editors reserve the right to deny publication of any letter.

Email letters to news@thedrumbeat.com or bring to Jenkins 1114 B.

THE MATH MAN

Photo by Sorayda Rivera

Department chair changes students' lives for more than 20 years with mathematics

By Sorayda Rivera
Student Life Editor

On a shelf of a small corner office, a hand painted mug and a note from a former student sit casually. The note is written on a small piece of torn yellow notebook paper and it shares the words of how one teacher had a major impact on a student's life.

The note read, "In my home country, I was in an orphanage and we handcrafted gifts for the people that made a difference in our lives. Thank you, Mr. Chappa, for making a difference in my life. I also want to major in math, and I hope I can become a great mathematician like you."

To some these things may go unnoticed, but for Tyler Junior College's Math Department Chair Chris Chappa, it's a reminder of his dedication and devotion to changing students' lives.

"I still have that note, and I still have that cup in my office," Chappa said. "I'd never get rid of those things."

Chappa started teaching at TJC in spring 2001 as a part-time professor, and in the fall, he began teaching full time. This year marks Chappa's 20th year of teaching math at TJC.

In the past 20 years, he has seen changes in both administration and the math department, but overall, he has seen the campus flourish into the impressive two-year campus it is now.

When Chappa started his career at TJC he said there were no Ornelas dorms, no tennis complex, and none of the nursing buildings were around. Also, he has seen the planetarium updated, and the current fine arts building update.

Chappa holds a bachelor's degree in math from Centenary College of Louisiana in Shreveport and a Master of Science in mathematics from what is now known as the University of Louisiana in Lafayette.

While mathematics is not usually a class most students are excited to take, Chappa said he became a math teacher because he accidentally fell into it.

"I majored in math in college because it was the easiest thing for me to do as disgusting as that may sound," Chappa said. "During college, I tutored people, and when I graduated from college, I didn't have a job, so I got one teaching, and I kind of liked it."

Chappa is in his ninth year serving as department chair. As chair, Chappa teaches less and is responsible for creating schedules, dealing with student complaints, evaluating faculty members, hiring new people, purchasing supplies, and overseeing the department's budget.

"You're pretty much a supervisor while you're still a teacher," Chappa said. "I think that anyone can learn math if they're taught right. I think that teaching should be done by dialogue not monologue."

Chappa has learned students don't want to sit in the classroom and be talked to for an hour and 15 minutes. This has helped him adapt his teaching style.

"If you listen, you're only using your ears, but if you listen and watch and talk, you're using more senses and you're using more of your brain, and like any other part of your body, the more you use it, the stronger it gets," Chappa said.

As those who have been in his class know, Chappa asks countless questions. "I ask tons of questions. I've taught classes where that's all I've ever done was ask questions," Chappa said.

He is aware this approach might irritate students because most of them just want to be told what they need to know. However, Chappa's approach is "to get them to tell me the results, not vice versa." He teaches his students by discovery.

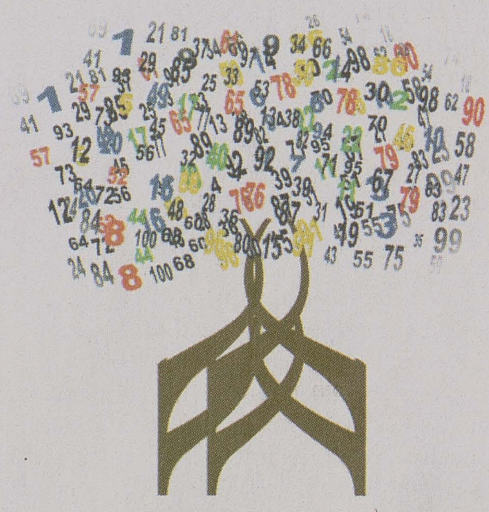
"I don't tell them this is how you do the problem. I set the parameters, and I ask the right questions to try to get them to tell me," Chappa said. "It doesn't matter if it's a contemporary math class or if it's calculus III class or anywhere in between."

Throughout his many years of teaching, Chappa has helped an abundance of students get through math hurdles and motivate them to never give up. Biology alumna and former student of Chappa, Amanda Day, is one of those students.

"I was a stay-at-home wife and mom for 20 years when I decided to go to college. I was terrified because I had not been in a classroom for many years," Day said. "I could add, subtract, multiply, divide, and that was it! I enrolled in an algebra class and realized very quickly I was way over my head."

Day expressed how Chappa is a very patient instructor.

"He has a way of simplifying math so that any student can not only repeat the process but understand why the formulas work," Day said. "He simplifies algebra to a visual and approachable process that is almost like a game."



"His endless supply of patience, corny jokes and vivid explanations showed me I could conquer a subject that had frightened me since the third grade," said Abygayl Aranjon-Alvarez, a 2008 alumna.

Likewise, Brett Burks, who graduated from TJC in 2014 with an associate degree in TV and radio broadcast journalism and former student of Chappa, talked about how Chappa has helped him.

"Mr. Chappa was a great teacher because I thought I was a lost cause when it came to algebra. I thought I was in a hump I would never get over, but he has a way of making algebra easy to understand," Burks said. "If there's something you don't understand, he is willing to take extra time to help you till it makes sense; that's how he helped me complete math."

Abygayl Aranjon-Alvarez, a 2008 alumna, shares her experience with math and being taught by Chappa.

"When you have the gift of knowing how to reach and leave a lasting impression on your students through a subject that many find intimidating, that's a blessing," Aranjon-Alvarez said. "Allowing students to be OK with confessing they don't understand the concept of what's being conveyed is a privilege not many instructors act on."

Before Chappa, Aranjon-Alvarez said she never thought she'd meet someone who would awaken her mental palette for a subject she hated.

"His endless supply of patience, corny jokes and vivid explanations showed me I could conquer a subject that had frightened me since the third grade," Alvarez added.

For many, math can be terrifying, but not for Chappa. For him, math is fun and just a game.

"I love puzzles, and I love games. It's always been a puzzle game to me," Chappa said. "I still make up problems in situations just to see if I can solve them, as sickening as it sounds to some people."

Even though math might be a game to Chappa, to many it might seem impossible. He shared some of the biggest myths in math, which are that math is hard and that nobody ever needs it.

Math is not all about numbers. It's actually all about problem-solving, Chappa explained. He said that is the biggest misconception because that's how people start learning about math.

Chappa always tells his students on the first day that, "I use this class as a tool for teaching problem-solving skills." Chappa said in life, "you will always have problems and they are all set up the same.

"Some involve numbers some don't, but I try to focus on how to analyze things from a problem-solving perspective in hopes that they can apply that to non-mathematical situations," Chappa said.

Teaching math can be a tricky subject, but Chappa has figured out a way that works for him.

"I try to convey that passion in class. My passion for doing math and my passion for getting people to understand," Chappa said. "I try to look at it from their perspective first. I try to figure out what they know and where do they stop knowing what they need to know. So, I try to get in their heads."

Chappa said he tries to make the atmosphere in his classroom as enjoyable as possible.

"I know how people feel about math," Chappa said. "I want people to enjoy coming to my class even if they don't learn as much as I want them to, I want them to want to be there."

Chappa tells his students that just because they fail that doesn't mean they're done.

"That just means you try, and you try again. You get better and you figure out what went wrong," Chappa said. "I always tell students that there's nothing wrong with making mistakes, but the worst part about it is not learning from them."

He said it doesn't matter if the mistake is made in math, relationships or work, learn from it, move on and prove yourself.

TJC alumni Faith Stiffler talked about the impact Chappa has had in her life.

"His impact on my life stretched far beyond the classroom and it's because of him I knew I wanted a profession in higher education," Stiffler said. "I hope to make even a fraction of the difference he made in my life with the students I work with every day."

Chappa expressed "there's hardly a better feeling educationally than taking somebody who said I can't do math and then that light bulb turns on."

When Stiffler first came to TJC she had zero background in math. She said through Chappa's teaching, she was able to gain a solid foundation for the subject. "I was able to get an A in all three classes I took him for," Stiffler said.

As an educator, Chappa believes teachers should care about their students outside of class, they should care about anything that affects the performance in class. He said he is, "more concerned about the student, and not did the student learn how to solve a quadratic equation," although he does like them to learn how to do that, as well.

Day said students shouldn't let their fear of math keep them from a career that requires advanced courses that seem impossible.

"Take it one class at a time," Day said. "If you put in the hard work and dedicate time to practice and study, Mr. Chappa will meet you wherever you are in respect to your math skills. He is a master of mathematics; he will help you build a solid foundation in math to reach your goals and encourage you throughout your journey! Make your time in his class count."

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